

MINUTES
ALTOONA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, August 6, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT

Randy Isenberg, Chairperson
Michael Haire, Vice Secretary
Jennifer Mikolajczk, Secretary
James Dixon
Richard Haines

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dave Albright
Chuck Myers

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF PRESENT

Lee Slusser, Director Community Development
Nick Ardizzone, Property and Program Coordinator

GUESTS PRESENT

Adam Long – Keller Engineers – Blair Gastro
Stephen Gildea – Blair Gastro
Katie Richards, Esq. – Yeager & Eberhardt – PA Barber Restrictive Covenant
Bill Kibler – Altoona Mirror

The Altoona City Planning Commission held its monthly meeting on August 6, 2019 in the Public Meeting Room, City Hall 1301 12th Street, Altoona. Randy Isenberg, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

1. **Approval of meeting minutes of July 2, 2019.**
The minutes of the July 2, 2019 were read. A motion was made by Richard Haines for approval. Motion was seconded by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion carried unanimously.
2. **Public Comment Period**
No Public Comment at this time.
3. **Release of Restrictive Covenant - 3523-3525 Fifth Avenue** –Mr. Ardizzone explained that there needs to be a motion for approval for the termination and release of restrictive covenant that was placed on this property in 2006 limiting the business operations at the property. Mr. Haines questioned why the Altoona City Planning Commission would be involved in this sort of action, stating that he thought that

restrictive covenants were to be between the private parties (the ones who placed it and the ones who accepted it). He felt it is very unusual for the government to become involved. Mr. Ardizzone further explained that it used to be a function of the government, but now that we have Developer Agreements it has eliminated the need for restricted covenants. A motion was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk to execute the release of the Restrictive Covenant. Motion was seconded by Jim Dixon. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Isenberg thanked Katie Richards for coming to the meeting and sharing the history on this covenant.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

4. **Blair Gastroenterology Associates** – Mr. Slusser introduced a subdivision and land development application to merge parcels and construct an 1,800 sqft. addition with landscaping and sidewalks at 810 Valley View Boulevard in Pleasant Valley. Mr. Slusser introduced Mr. Adam Long of Keller Engineers who presented the plan to the commission. Mr. Ardizzone stated that the subdivision has already been approved at the staff level, so the only part of the plan to be reviewed is land development. Mr. Long said that there is extensive landscaping already in place, so the plan is to add a vegetation screening and replace the trees and vegetation that has died over the years. The following waiver is being requested from the Planning Commission.

1. 640-65.E(3)(c)&(d): One tree and six shrubs in interior landscape islands. Request: Waiver of exact requirement to two existing islands. Justification: These are existing islands, and there are two mature juniper shrubs consuming the whole island. There is an existing light pole in the center of the island, which will inhibit tree planting and tree health. Meeting the exact requirement of the current ordinance would require removal of two healthy existing shrubs that cover the whole island in order to plant the required number of plants. A motion was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk to approve Resolution No. 08-60-19 PAC19-0007 approving the Land Development Plans, New Building Addition for Blair Gastroenterology Associates. Motion was seconded by Michael Haire. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 08-06-19-PAC19-0007
A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS, NEW BUILDING
ADDITION FOR BLAIR GASTROENTEROLOGY ASSOCIATES

WHEREAS an application for a land development project has been filed with the Altoona City Planning Commission (hereinafter "ACPC") by 810 Valley View Partners, LLC (hereinafter referred to as the "DEVELOPER"); and

WHEREAS, the DEVELOPER desires to construct a new addition to the existing building located at 810 Valley View Boulevard, Altoona, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, staff has reviewed the LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN, incorporated herein by this reference and filed with the ACPC by the Developer, and has found it to be in compliance excepting waiver requests, as a FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT with all applicable provisions of the City of Altoona's zoning, subdivision/land development, and storm water ordinances subject to the conditions of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the ACPC has determined that this LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN constitutes a FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN in full compliance with the City of Altoona's zoning, subdivision/land development, and storm water ordinances subject to the conditions of this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the ACPC has the power to APPROVE modifications to the City of Altoona's subdivision and land development requirements, and the Developer has requested the following waivers that are hereby approved by the ACPC:

1. §640-65.E(3)(c)&(d): One tree and six shrubs in interior landscape islands.
Request: Waiver of exact requirement to two existing islands. Justification: These are existing islands, and there are two mature juniper shrubs consuming the whole island. There is an existing light pole in the center of the island, which will inhibit tree planting and tree health. Meeting the exact requirement of the current ordinance would require removal of two healthy existing shrubs that cover the whole island in order to plant the required number of plants. Staff does not object to this waiver.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania, that the application and plans, as filed by the DEVELOPER, are hereby approved subject to the following conditions:

1. A letter from the Blair County Conservation District approving the plan shall be provided to the City. (Chapter 620)
2. Any necessary permits from DEP must be provided.

3. The ACPC Consulting Engineer's comments contained in the Engineer's letter to the City dated May 16, 2019 and attached hereto must be satisfied.
4. Financial security to cover the cost of all public improvements must be provided to the City prior to plan signature. (Chapter 640)
5. A developer's agreement prepared by the ACPC must be executed by the Developer.
6. All required signatures must be obtained on the plan.
7. The conditions of the plan must be accepted in writing by developer within 30 days of plan approval.
8. A copy of the RECORDED plan must be provided to the ACPC as soon as it is recorded.
9. All conditions must be met, fees paid, and the plan signed and recorded within the plan deadline.

RESOLVED by the Altoona City Planning Commission this sixth day of August,
2019

ATTEST:

Secretary

Chair

5. **Staff Level Reviews** – Staff has been working on the following subdivision/land development applications since the July 2, 2019, regular meeting.
1. 2300 North Branch Avenue, Drenning Center, Subdivision – Approved
 2. 810 Valley View Blvd., Gastroenterology Associates, Subdivision – Approved

Urban Redevelopment

6. **Spot Blight Declaration** – Mary Johnson presented the following properties to the blighted program.

1420 Washington Avenue

Owner: Norman Cuff, Jr.
% Blair County Repository
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Property is vacant and in substandard condition. Helen Schmidt from the Blair County Office, has requested the City's assistance in demolishing this property. Code enforcement submitted a demolition letter to the Count on July 29, 2019. Property is a duplex and filled with debris and garbage. Roof is in bad shape, shingles tearing off and holes present. Side, gutters and downspouts in disrepair. Some windows fair/some broken. All utilities are off. Taxes have not been paid since 2003 (\$5, 994.89). Property is in the Blair County Repository and the County will reimburse the City for all hauling and dumping fees. of demolition. Motion was made by Dave Albright to declare the property blighted. Jim Dixon seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

202-204 Willow Avenue

Owner: Doris Wright & Adam Caldwell
204 Willow Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601

Property is vacant and in substandard condition. Property was submitted to the Blighted Property Demo Program on June 21, 2019. Property is residential and is in poor condition, porch, gutters, downspouts, awnings are falling off. Foundation is full of cracks. Roof is in deteriorated condition. All utilities are off. Taxes owed for 2017 and 2018 totaling \$1,430.01. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. This property had been presented at the July 2, 2019 meeting and the commission felt they needed more information before declaring property blighted. Ms. Johnson reported that she has heard nothing from the owners and actually

doesn't know where they are as this is the only address for the owners. A neighbor told her that the house has been vacant for a couple of years. At this point the Commission asked if it would be possible for the Code Officer who submitted the property to give more insight on this property. Therefore, this has been tabled to our next meeting.

1718 5th Avenue

Owner: Connie Sease
1907 11th Avenue, Apt 4
Altoona, PA 16601

Property is vacant and in substandard condition. Property was submitted to the Blighted Property Demo Program on July 9, 2019. Property exterior is in poor condition along with the roof, windows and foundation. Interior ceilings are falling due to water damage. Owner has received a demolition notice and has asked for the City's assistance with the demolition. Owner has submitted proof of income and she falls within the guidelines for assistance. Water and gas are off, electric is unknown. Taxes are current. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion was made by Jim Dixon to declare the property blighted. Michael Haire seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

1009 18th Avenue

Owner: Kay Lightner
213 Cherry Street
Roaring Spring, PA 16673

Property is vacant and in substandard condition. Property was submitted to the Blighted Property Demo Program on July 12, 2019. Exterior structure has rotted areas and a collapsed front porch. Roof needs replaced. Owner has contacted our office to request the City's assistance with the demolition of the property. She states she is financially unable to demolish on her own. She has been keeping the taxes up to date. Water and electric are off, gas is unknown. At the time she contacted the City for assistance, paperwork had not been submitted under the program. The owner will submit paperwork on her financial status once the property has been determined blighted. Under the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code, the City will demolish the structure and place a lien on the property for the cost of demolition. Motion to declare the property blighted was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk. Motion was seconded by Michael Haire. Motion passed unanimously. A brief

discussion ensued. Ms. Johnson stated that there is another property foundation next to this one, she feels that it was a house foundation. Mr. Isenberg asked that she research it to find out what it was and who owns it. The Commission would like to see the Demo Crew clean up and remove the debris while they have the equipment on site. Ms. Johnson agreed and if needed she will bring this back to Commission for a blighted declaration.

7. **Zoning**

Staff re-introduced the proposed land use table and explained the changes that he made to it. The Planning Commission agreed to read this over and come back with comments next month.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

8. **Planning Reports**

- a. Grantsmanship activities (CDBG and HOME) – Staff is in the beginning stage of developing a new 5 year comprehensive plan for the city. The consultants are here this week meeting with the community and providers to determine what the needs of the city are. A discussion ensued when Mr. Isenberg asked if CDBG money could be used to help assist in the clean up and maintenance of the Cemeteries in the city. Ms. Johnson will check with HUD to see if it would be possible.
- b. Zoning Hearing Board – Variances were needed for Drenning Center and Union Square. A citizen is requesting to build a garage. When the Board meets in August they will be hearing a case on the Wise Guys Pizza signage.
- c. Shade Tree Commission – Commission under the direction of Bill Elmendorf who is a Professor of Forestry at Penn State and Alan Sam the State College Borough Forester has drafted a New Shade Tree Ordinance. Right now, it is the stage that all department heads will be asked to review and send comments back.
- d. GAEDC – No meetings through the summer
- e. Blair County Planning Commission – No report

9. **Commissioners Forum** – No report

10. **Questions from the Media and Public**

11. **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Jennifer Mikolajczk to adjourn the meeting at 4:20 P.M. Richard Haines seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Michael Haire, Vice Secretary